

INTERVIEW I

DATE: August 10, 1978
INTERVIEWEE: CALLAN GRAHAM
INTERVIEWER: MICHAEL L. GILLETTE
PLACE: LBJ Library, Austin, Texas

Tape 1 of 2

G: Mr. Graham, very briefly sketch where you came from and how you ended up working with Coke Stevenson.

CG: I have lived in Junction, Texas, almost all my life, went to school there and became a lawyer and started practicing law in Junction about 1935. Coke Stevenson was in the legislature at that time, had a law office in Junction, and encouraged me to study law. I didn't get a degree from a university. I studied law the old-fashioned way, like they used to do, in lawyers' offices, and then took the bar examination. Coke Stevenson was very encouraging and helpful to me in that respect. He let me use his law library in Junction. Then when I was licensed to practice law, he gave me the "crumbs off the table" of his law practice, as I always called it. 1935 was a pretty tough time; for a young lawyer in a small town to get started was pretty tough. So Coke helped me in many ways. The little legal matters that he thought I could handle he let me have, and I could make a few bucks out of it. He was very helpful in that way, just a good friend. That's the background.

I ran for the legislature in 1948, the same year he ran for the U.S. Senate, and I was elected in the same primaries and of course

Graham -- I -- 2

didn't have any opposition in the general election. It was tantamount to election in those days. But I was elected in the primaries in that same year. I had already won a seat in the legislature without a run-off, so when the run-off came I helped campaign for Coke. He was a good friend, neighbor, benefactor. I'm just trying to short-circuit this a little bit. I can talk all day about those years, but I don't think they're significant. This establishes, I think, the relationship between Coke Stevenson and myself. He was my friend, my benefactor, and I thought he was a great statesman.

When the close vote came in 1948, in the run-off primary between Coke and Lyndon Johnson, I was one of those that was asked to go down into Alice, Jim Wells County, and investigate the corrected returns that added two hundred votes to Lyndon Johnson's vote and one or two to Coke's vote. At that time that made all the difference. This was about, something like, a week, I'm not sure, after the run-off primary when I went down there. It was probably less than a week, but it's hard to recall, three or four or five days or something of the sort. He asked me and Kellis Dibrell and Jim Gardner, lawyers, in San Antonio, to go down into Jim Wells County and see what we could find out. It was just that sort of a thing.

So we headed out down there with a law book on election law and that was it. We've laughed about it a lot since then, especially Kellis Dibrell and I, because we left in a hurry. I came from Junction down to Austin to check to see what was going on, and that's when they asked me to go down there with Mr. Dibrell. I didn't have a clean

Graham -- I -- 3

shirt and didn't have a clean pair of socks or anything, and we stayed down there in Alice for I guess a week or ten days. We'd frequently kid each other that we exchanged shirts so we wouldn't stink so bad.

That is much of the background of how I got into the 1948 election. I campaigned for Coke in the run-off primary and in the first primary, made statewide radio speeches and that sort of thing, and did what I could do as a little country lawyer. Then I got involved in the investigation down there in Alice. So if you'll stop here just a minute, stop the tape just a minute--

[Interruption]

G: We really want to get everything on. Now Stevenson announced first for the campaign before LBJ did.

CG: Yes. Stevenson became a candidate for all practical purposes in the fall of 1947, almost a year before this election that caused the controversy.

G: He had been speaker of the house and lieutenant governor and governor.

CG: Member of the legislature, speaker of the house two terms, and lieutenant governor and governor for two terms or three--I've forgotten, maybe it was three, I don't know--it was during the war years.

G: Do you think initially he felt that Lyndon Johnson would be a serious threat to his candidacy?

CG: I don't think he did. I didn't, and I don't think he did. Lyndon was a congressman at that time, had never made a statewide race.

G: He had lost in that Senate race.

CG: Oh, yes, he had lost in that two years before, wasn't it, or four years?

G: About 1941. It was seven years before.

Graham -- I -- 4

CG: 1941? I didn't know. I'd forgotten about that. Yes, he did. But Coke had won since then and had won several statewide races.

Basically, though, in spite of the other race, Lyndon was just a congressman at that time, was not a statewide official and hadn't held statewide office up until that time. I don't know what Coke thought, you ask me that, but my impression was that Lyndon would not be a serious contender early on.

G: Did either of the candidates make an attempt to back the other one out of the race?

CG: Not that I know anything about, no.

G: Wright Patman was considering running that year.

CG: That I know nothing about.

G: I guess Governor Stevenson had a rather peculiar style of campaigning back then. It seems that both in the first primary and in the run-off he would just disappear from the campaign trail for a week or so and go back to his ranch.

CG: Go back to the ranch, yes.

G: Do you remember those occasions?

CG: I can't separate those from the campaign generally. I know Coke Stevenson wasn't, to me, extremely aggressive in campaigning. A lot of us on his side thought he ought to do more and so on, but he wouldn't do it.

G: Why wouldn't he?

CG: I just think it's his nature. Coke was a sort who they used to call "Calculating Coke" back when he was speaker and so on. Coke wasn't

Graham -- I -- 5

prone to do anything fast. He did a lot of thinking and a lot of contemplation. I don't know why other than that. It's just his nature not to be overly, or even normally, aggressive, probably, in politics or in campaigns.

But to go on now, I said earlier, when the tape was off, that we knew--I say "we," I mean those relatively close to the campaign and Mr. Stevenson himself--a long time before the 1948 election that the machine counties, the George Parr and the Manuel Ramon machines in Webb County and in Duval and the surrounding areas there, would go all out against Stevenson. Now they had supported him for governor, but they turned against him because of an appointment he made when there was a vacancy in the district attorney's office in Webb County while he was governor. This is what really affected the course of history, as it turns out; politically, in the history of the state, a minor appointment to office had this effect. Otherwise, I'm certain that the Parr machine and the Ramon machine in Webb County and whoever's involved in those machines down there, would have continued to support Coke. There would have been no reason not to.

I haven't got all the facts about this, it's just as related to me by Coke and others, but while Stevenson was governor during the war there were complaints received by his office from the War Department about the extent of vice, rolling the soldiers, et cetera, around Laredo Air Force Base. The War Department had complained to the Governor about it and wanted to know what he could do or would do about it. In the beginning he told them there wasn't anything he

Graham -- I -- 6

could do about it, because that's a sort of a country of its own down there, Webb County, Duval County and all, that as governor he could do very little, except maybe send state rangers in there to see about it, but that no convictions would probably result in view of the fact that the district attorney, the judge, the juries and all were selected by the folks there on the scene, and that nothing could be done. He was a practical man. He just knew that he could make a show, maybe, by sending rangers down there, but nothing would come of it. So he didn't do anything for a while. I don't know the dates of all this. I can't remember that, but it was during the war.

At some point along there during the war one of the Kazen boys-- I don't know whether it was Philip Kazen, it wasn't Chick because I know Chick real well, he's in Congress now--was already district attorney and came to Austin and tendered his resignation because he wanted to join the military. Coke accepted the resignation, and at the time, or in conjunction with the tendering of the resignation, Kazen told the governor that they wanted somebody--and I've forgotten who, whether it was another Kazen, appointed to fill the vacancy. Coke didn't do that. He accepted the resignation, made no comment about who he was going to appoint to fill the vacancy. I imagine that the Kazens and people in Laredo assumed that he would favor them and go ahead and appoint the man they wanted. That was more or less to be expected in those days. The local patronage--who was appointed in Webb County or Duval County or any of those counties down there to public office by a governor--would generally be who the machine wanted appointed. I

Graham -- I -- 7

think that would be true of any governor, whoever was in office, especially if they'd supported you, and they had supported Coke. Ordinarily it's a small matter--who cares, you know.

So he appointed a man named Truman Phelps district attorney instead of the person that the machine wanted appointed. And [he] told Truman Phelps that he'd never be re-elected, that he was just going to serve whatever the unexpired term was, he certainly couldn't be re-elected down there, but to go down there and see what he could do about cleaning up the vice and handling the complaints that came out of the War Department with respect to the military. That, in the political sense, is a "mortal sin" for the governor in such a case not to appoint the man they wanted, especially in an office locally critically important, district attorney. That is what turned the machine against Stevenson.

G: But this was at Webb County. Was Parr that concerned about Webb County?

CG: No. As I understand those machines down there, and by no means should you think I'm an expert on them because I'm not, Parr ran Duval County, and adjoining precincts like thirteen in Jim Wells County and surrounding parts of other counties. This was his bailiwick. You had other people down there in Rio Grande City [in Starr County]; either Arnold Vale or one of the the Aguierras was boss in that particular area, one or the other. They took time about over a period of years. At that time Manuel Ramon was county judge in Webb County. There were three machines, really, and ordinarily, in statewide office, they worked together. This is, they'd get together, I suppose--and this is supposition--and say, "Who are we going to go for

Graham -- I -- 8

for statewide office?" I say this because they nearly always went for the same person. It's an assumption on my part, but there were three independent sort of "dictators" or bosses in Rio Grande City, Laredo and in San Diego in Duval County. That whole bunch, I think--and here again, I can't state it as historical fact--but when you turned against one of them you turned against all of them.

When Truman Phelps was appointed district attorney in Laredo, that was a Manuel Ramon's bailiwick. Manuel Ramon's influence and friendship with Parr, and with whoever was running Rio Grande City politics at that time, was such that they all would join together on that or any other statewide issue. They were mutually self-serving groups, really. You hear very little publicity about Manuel Ramon and his organization in Webb County or the Rio Grande City organization, which was headed by Arnold Vale, who I knew in the legislature, a good friend of mine. At that time, it was Arnold Vale. As I say, it changed from time to time in Rio Grande City. The control of the machine and the politics in Rio Grande City changed, and I don't know just when the changes took place. Arnold Vale ran it some of the time, and then the Aguierrres ran it part of the time.

G: Let's talk some more about the Parr machine here. Did Coke Stevenson have any other run-in with any of these machines prior to the election?

CG: Not that I know anything about, no. This was the only run-in that I know anything about. As I say, that little appointment of a district attorney, filling a vacancy in an unexpired term, really was the key, ultimately, to the outcome of that election. Because, had Coke continued

Graham -- I -- 9

to receive the support of those machine counties as he had in the past, he'd have won by a pretty good, big majority.

G: They always voted in blocks out there.

CG: Yes, and let me say this. I think that from what little I know about the history of those machines down there--and I think at least the Parr machine was broken up, it's a thing of the past, I guess, from what I read in the papers, I haven't got any recent information about it--they were originally, and probably continued to be for many, many years, paternalistic organizations. It wasn't a matter of fraud, I don't think, or stealing votes over the years. It was that George Parr had the loyalty of the Mexican people of those areas, and whatever he wanted that's what they wanted. He had their loyalty because he was good to them. Now, I'm talking about times on back even before George Parr. Archie Parr, his daddy, was really the founder of the Parr machine. They did it by being good to people. When they were sick, they got them doctors. When they needed medicine, they got them medicine. When they were hungry, they got them food. When they needed a job, they got them a job. It was very much like the old ward heeling politics in the East, in the big cities in the East, down there.

So I don't think that this necessarily has to involve fraud or anything illegal. They owed their loyalty to them and had a great admiration and love for old Archie Parr, and then George continued it on. I would say the same thing about the machines in Webb and Rio Grande City. Too often we tend to look upon those people as evil characters, with

Graham -- I -- 10

caricatures of them as big cigar-smoking people that are engaged in something crooked all the time. I think that's a warped view of machine people, generally, whether it's in the big cities in the East, or down there.

You have to remember, I think, that they were dealing, especially in the earlier years, with, I guess, 90 per cent Mexican population, 90 per cent of whom were probably illiterate at that time, back in Archie Parr's day. I don't think it's necessarily evil that somebody sort of pulls that bunch together and directs them in some direction, and I think that's what the machines did. I think that's what Manuel Ramon did. I think he was a good man. I knew Manuel Ramon later when I was in the legislature. He was County Judge of Webb County. I was engaged in some matters in the legislature that made me think Manuel Ramon was an unusually patriotic citizen because of some support he gave some legislation in Austin through Chick Kazen, who was then a member of the house from Laredo, that hardly any of the county judges in Texas [supported]. I introduced the bill, and nearly every county judge in Texas was against it.

Allan Shivers was governor at that time, and it was really his proposal that we revamp the farm to market road system. I introduced a bill, and it would have required the counties to give up money, and substantial amounts of money, especially the bigger counties, out of the surplus generated by the Road Bond Assumption Act. That's a technical thing, but there was a surplus building up in the old fund that took care of county road bonds back during the Depression. They now had more money in the fund, which came from gasoline taxes, than necessary to pay the

Graham -- I -- 11

bonds, so there was a surplus and that surplus was being distributed to the counties--at that time, a little over seven million dollars a year.

Now Webb County got a good chunk of that. My bill was to stop the counties getting the money and let the gasoline tax go back into the highway department instead of going in cash to these counties, because the original purpose was simply to pay their bonds off. Now that their bonds were paid off, why should they get cash? Manuel Ramon ultimately came up to Austin. Chick Kazen had him come up here and meet with me in the Speaker's office to go over this bill in detail, and, by golly, he broke loose and told Chick, "Go ahead and vote for Graham's bill. It will cost us some money, but I think it's good legislation."

That's just an illustration of what I'm saying. Manuel Ramon impressed me as being a good man.

G: Let's talk about the campaign a little more. Again, contrasting the two styles of campaigns, Coke Stevenson would campaign in the old Plymouth with Bob Murphey driving around, I suppose, and Lyndon Johnson used the helicopter. What did the Stevenson camp think of the helicopter?

CG: I can't answer that. I just don't know. When you say what they thought, I don't know. It was a novel thing in those days. Helicopters were quite new in 1948, and nobody had ever done that before. My own idea of it was that it was a stunt, but I don't know what anybody else thought about it, what Coke thought about it.

G: You don't know, for example, if the Stevenson campaign ever considered using one?

Graham -- I -- 12

CG: Not that I know of.

G: What about George Petty's role in the campaign? Did you have much contact with Petty?

CG: I had none at all. I never met him, so I don't know anything about Petty.

G: Did Governor Stevenson have much contact with him?

CG: I don't know that. I can't answer that, truthfully. I assume that he knew him and so on, but I don't know what contact they had. You see, Coke got into that race, you have to remember, almost a year before this election. I don't mean he announced officially, but he was making speeches and telling people that he was going to run, and all that sort of thing.

G: His relationship with labor during that campaign was a peculiar thing. It almost seems that he and Johnson were sort of vying to see who could be more anti-labor.

CG: Yes, that's right. A lot of us thought that Coke made a mistake when he went to Washington to talk to somebody up there about the Taft-Hartley right to work law, or something or other--I've forgotten now, it's too far back. But we thought he made a mistake in that case because that was more or less a little bit pro-labor. It looked like he was making an effort to get some of the labor vote. I don't blame him for that; you get all the votes you can get from wherever you can get them. But I know there were some of the conservative supporters [who] thought he should not have done that. I've forgotten in detail what it was.

G: I believe a reporter accosted him while he was shaving or something

Graham -- I -- 13

and asked him how he stood either on Taft-Hartley or some other bill.

CG: That's not what I remember. He went to Washington and made some more or less formal statement about the Taft-Hartley Act, either keeping it or repealing it. I don't know what side he was on, except that I remember that the more conservative or "anti-labor" people didn't think he should have done it, among his friends.

G: He also met with Forrestal while he was there. Can you recall that?

CG: No. I just remember that he did, but that's all.

G: Why did he go to Washington?

CG: That I don't know. I've seen in the papers lately that somebody has said that he went up there to look for a place to live. I don't believe that. That could be true, and I'm not denying it. I don't think he did that. He had plenty of time to find a place to live. I think he went up there at least to talk about the Taft-Hartley law, see Forrestal about a national defense matter or something like that. I'm not privy to what he went for, but I don't believe he went up there looking for a house. I think that's a mistake. While he was there, he might have checked up on it.

G: He had the support of Dan Moody. Did you ever get any insight into the relationship between Dan Moody and Lyndon Johnson?

CG: Very little. Dan Moody was one of the lawyers on our side after the second primary when we got into court and made that investigation down there. I just knew Dan Moody very casually until then. I didn't work with him closely, except I was a lawyer and he and Clint Small

Graham -- I -- 14

were sort of the top lawyers on our side. Kellis Dibrell, Jim Gardner and myself and some other young squirt lawyers around were doing the legwork, as usually happens. We were going down and making an investigation and calling the information back or bringing it back to them. I knew Dan only in that way.

G: Who asked you to go down?

CG: Coke did.

G: Did he tell you what to look for, or do you remember?

CG: No. Let me go back just a little bit. You see, this goes back to the year before that; in fact, it goes all the way back to the appointment of the district attorney. Coke knew when he didn't appoint their man for district attorney in Laredo that they were going to be down on him and turn against him if he ever ran for state-wide office again. When he decided to run for the Senate he assumed that they would be against him all the way, because, as I said, in their view he had committed the mortal sin.

I went with Coke to Laredo to talk to the bosses there in the fall of 1947. I've forgotten who all was in the room. I remember Manuel Ramon was one of them. There were some other faces but now I can't tie faces to names. We met in the Hamilton Hotel room. I was driving Coke at that time. We were on our way to Corpus Christi for him to make a speech at the Rotary Club. This was in the fall of 1947, almost a year before this election. I heard the conversation between him and the folks in Laredo, including Ramon and whoever else was at the meeting. It seemed like Pepe Martin, [but] I'm not sure about that. He was mayor later or maybe he was then. But before we got there Coke told me what he

Graham -- I -- 15

was going to do. He said, "I'm going to ask them for their support. I know I won't get it because that's already determined, but I don't want them to ever say that I didn't ask them to support me." While we were on our way down to Corpus [Christi] we would just stop by and chat with them. I heard that conversation.

He told them then he was going to run for the Senate. They were very nice, very gentlemenly. They said, "Coke, you know we can't support you," in effect, "and you know why we're not going to. We're going to have to be all out against you." They explained a little bit in detail why it's so important to them that they control the patronage in those counties. He didn't appoint the district attorney that they wanted. He hurt them severely politically, [and] they could soon lose control if they couldn't control who is appointed to local office. You can see where in a machine or an organization of that kind that would be exceedingly important. So they told him very politely, "We regret it. We like you. We're not against you personally, but we've got this to do."

Remember, at this time Lyndon Johnson, as far as I know, hadn't even been mentioned as a candidate. This was anti-Coke Stevenson--not pro-Johnson. I think that those machines would have been equally anti-Coke Stevenson whoever he had run against, whether it had been Lyndon Johnson or anybody else, in that run-off. If Lyndon had never been a candidate I think they'd have gone just as hard against Coke in delivering the block vote down there.

That's a long way around back to the last question you asked me.

Graham -- I -- 16

I've forgotten what it was. Oh--did Coke tell me when he sent me down there, or asked me to go down there, Kellis Dibrell and I and Jim Gardner-- Kellis and I went the first day. I think Jim came a day or two later--no, he didn't say what to look for.

You see, we zeroed in on Precinct Thirteen for one reason. The vote had seesawed back and forth for a week, with Coke being in the lead a hundred and two votes and then Lyndon being in the lead a hundred or so votes, just back and forth and back and forth as late returns came in from every last little precinct in the state. Then we began to get "corrected returns." And I say it quote here because everybody wonders about these corrected returns. Right at the very last, while we were still a little ahead, just hanging on by our fingernails, here comes "corrected" returns from Precinct Thirteen in Jim Wells County adding two hundred votes to Lyndon, one or two for Coke. That was enough to throw the election. So that's why we zeroed in on Precinct Thirteen. We didn't have any more advance information on Precinct Thirteen than we did anyplace else, except this was the last two hundred votes that came in that threw the election, or tilted the thing, to Lyndon.

G: Were you in Junction when these late votes came in and then drove to Austin, or were you already in Austin?

CG: No, I came down to Austin. I've forgotten whether he called there or somebody in his office called and asked me to come or whether I just came just to be around and see what was going on. I don't remember how I got here. I got here, and he asked me to go along with Kellis

Graham -- I -- 17

Dibrell. Now then, he didn't know what to look for at all. You asked me did he tell us what to look for. He did not tell us what to look for because he didn't know what to look for. I'll tell you what we did, if you'd care for me to.

G: Sure. Yes, and don't leave anything out.

CG: Okay, I'll try not to. Remember thirty years is a long time, and your memory fades in some areas. I probably remember things that I wanted to remember and maybe have forgotten things that I didn't want to remember.

We--Dibrell and I--talked all the way down in the car: "What are we going to do?" This was just a wide-open proposition, to go down there and see what was going on. I remember before we left that somebody, I don't know who, around the headquarters office here in Austin, told us to be sure--of course, it was summertime--not to wear a suit coat because it might be dangerous, that they were known to kill people down there. This was a little scary for us. They said, "Be sure there are no coats so they can see you, don't have a gun." We were, as I say, a little uptight going down into this area that we'd heard so much about before. On the way down we thought and talked between ourselves, "What are we going to do? What shall we do?"

We decided that one of the first things to do would be to go to the Democratic county chairman, who supposedly has all the returns, and ask to see the voting list from Precinct Thirteen. We had this book on election law with us. Every citizen has a right to look at the voting list, the poll list they called it. [It is] very clearly

Graham -- I -- 18

stated in the law, so we thought there'd be no problem. He was in a bank, Alice National Bank, or some bank in Alice. I won't try to remember the name of the bank. We found that out after we got there. So we went to the bank and asked him if we could see the poll list for Precinct Thirteen. He said, "No." We cited the law to him. That, in retrospect, was rather comical. We said, "Well, here's the law right here. It says any citizen has the right to see it." He said, "I know that. But you can't see them because they're locked up in that vault, and I'm not going to unlock the vault. That's why you can't see them." As I say, that's kind of comical now. He didn't say he wasn't going to show them to us, [he] said, "I won't open the vault. They're locked up in the bank vault, and I will not open it."

G: Did he know who you were and what you were [up to]?

CG: We told him we represented Coke. Yes, we told him we were attorneys for Coke. He knew what we were up to. I can't think of his name. He was county chairman, but he was replaced that day as county chairman. A fellow named Adams had been elected county chairman, and under the laws then, in party office like that, the new county chairman takes office the day of the election because they run the election machinery, the primaries. I don't know whether that's true anymore or not, but it was then.

We later--and I can't get all of this time-wise, whether it was that afternoon or the next day or two days later, I can't remember that much detail--did find Mr. Adams, who was the newly elected Democratic

Graham -- I -- 19

county chairman, and found out that he was not necessarily friendly to us but not unfriendly, just seemed to be neutral in this election matter. We told him, "Why don't you go then to the outgoing or the ex-Democratic county chairman who has the records in the bank vault and tell him you want them? You're entitled to them under the law," which he was. He said, "All right." He went up to the bank and got the same answer we did: "You can't get them because they're locked up in the vault, and I won't open it." He came back and reported to us. Well, this made him a little more friendly to us than he had been, because he could see something was fishy here. We talked about it, sat around in the hotel room, "What can we do? We need to look at that darn thing."

We came up with this strategy, that he would go back up there and say, "Look, the newspapers every day are full of charges of fraud, countercharges, all kinds of stuff about this election. I didn't have anything to do with it. I wasn't even county chairman, but I feel like I might get in trouble if I don't either have those records in my possession or know that they're back there in that vault. I don't know that they're back there. If somebody asked me I'd have to say, 'Well, you said so.' But I don't know, and I want to look at them. Just let me look at the poll list of Precinct Thirteen. That's all. I'll leave it there and make enough notes from it to be able to prove that I could identify it, that I had seen it and it was locked up in your vault and that I know it's in safekeeping."

That stratagem worked. They let him in the vault for about

Graham -- I -- 20

five minutes and showed him the Precinct [Thirteen poll list]. We had told him before he got there exactly what to do, because we assumed that two hundred votes had been added on to that poll list. They're numbered along the side. I don't know whether you've ever seen a poll list or not, but the names of the voters and the numbers are over here. We asked him to look up two hundred from the bottom and get that name and then go one above that, which would be the last local voter if this was all added as we then assumed, get his name or her name, and then the first of the two hundred and then the last one on the list and as many in between as he permits. I think he got eleven names. He got the critical ones, the two hundredth from the bottom and the two hundred and first from the bottom, and the last one. That would be three, and then he got eight, I suppose, scattered along in the middle before the man said, "That's enough" and put the poll list back in the envelope, box or whatever he had it in.

That's where we got the names. Within a matter of minutes we had contacted the man whose name was just before the two hundredth, the two hundred and first name from the bottom. I've forgotten his name now, but we found him and asked him if he voted. He said, "Yes." We asked him what time he voted. He said, "Exactly seven o'clock. I was the last voter." We said, "How do you know that? How do you remember that?" He said, "Because I was in my house and my wife said, 'If you're going to vote you better hurry,' because the polls were about to close. I just lived three or four blocks from the polls, and I ran up there and got there. They were fixing to lock the door, and

Graham -- I -- 21

they let me in and unlocked the door. So I knew I was the last voter." He was shown as the last, two hundred and one from the bottom.

Then we got the next one who was alleged to have voted on this list and talked to him. He had not voted. One of them was a student over at the college down in Kingsville, I've forgotten the name of it. He wasn't even in town on election day, hadn't been for some time, was going to summer school down there.

G: Did he seem surprised that his name was on there?

CG: Oh yes. So with all the other eleven, the total of eleven said, "No." Some of them were gone, some of them were sick, some of them--you know, all kinds of things. They just hadn't voted. Of course, there is where we discovered, when this fellow Adams looked at the poll list, that the ink color changed right at two hundred and the handwriting was obviously a different handwriting that had written those last votes. When it got here, I forgot whether it was black or blue or what, but there was a change in color of ink and handwriting obvious at the two hundred point from the bottom.

G: This is what Adams told you?

CG: Yes.

G: What about the handwriting?

CG: He just said it looked different and the ink color was different.

G: He didn't say that they were all alphabetical and all in the same handwriting.

CG: Yes. The ones we got were alphabetical. Eleven is all we had.

They were alphabetical. He had noticed as he was scanning down that

Graham -- I -- 22

they were in alphabetical order. That's where we got that information. He didn't check every one of them, but there were A's, all A's. I've forgotten, maybe they were all A's. I don't know whether they ever got into the B's or not. It was unusual for two hundred people to vote and all their names starting with A. I'm not sure whether it was all A's or A's and B's, but it was obvious to him when he saw it that this was alphabetically arranged. The names we had were all A's, as I recall. So then we knew to our own satisfaction, and I think that's pretty darned good evidence, that the two hundred votes had been added after the election.

Another interesting little tidbit--

G: Excuse me.

CG: Go ahead.

G: I didn't want to stop you. How long did you stay down there?

CG: I'm guessing at, say, a week. We stayed there until the Democratic Executive Committee met in Fort Worth. I don't remember that date. See, it met just ahead of the Democratic state convention.

G: Did you talk to any of the election officials other than these two county chairman?

CG: Yes, we talked to a fellow named Clarence Martens. Clarence Martens was the secretary to the county executive committee. He called us in the middle of the night. You have to remember we were a little bit uptight. We were a little scared down there, sticking our nose into all this local stuff. One night, late at night, I won't try to recall the hour, we had a call at the hotel room from a fellow named Clarence

Graham -- I -- 23

Martens who said he was secretary to this county Democratic executive committee and would like to meet us out on a road out in the country. Is there a town named Orange Grove or something like that down there? Anyway, it was a country road, graded dirt road. He gave us directions how to get there, and he would be out there at an intersection or something of the sort. We decided better two of us go. We just didn't know what we were getting into. Again, we were a little uptight, a little scared.

But we went out there and asked him to get out of his car and get in our car. He did, and then he told us, in substance, "Look, I've been reading in the paper, and it looks to me like I signed a certificate adding two hundred votes onto Johnson's total. I want to correct it." We, of course, asked him, "How come you [came] to do it?" He said, "Well, I was secretary. They called a meeting of the executive committee to recanvass the vote, and I was secretary of the committee. When I got to the meeting they just handed me this certificate and said, 'Clarence, we have already canvassed the votes. We got here a little early and went ahead and canvassed them. Here is the certificate. Go ahead and sign it.'" He said, "I signed it, thought nothing of it. But now, from reading the newspaper I've come to believe that I signed something that was false."

Graham -- I -- 24

That's where the certificate adding the two hundred votes was sent into the secretary of state. He said, "I just don't know what to do. I don't want to be a party to anything like that." He was just a nice guy. He said, "What can I do?" I said, "Well, Mr. Martens, I don't know. If you'd stolen two hundred dollars, the only thing I could suggest would be to take the two hundred back, and if you'd stolen two hundred votes, give them back. That's all I can suggest." "Oh no," he said.

Now this is where some of the frightening stuff comes in. "No," he said, "I wouldn't dare change that certificate that I sent." I asked him why not, [and] he said, "They're liable to put me in the penitentiary for something the rest of my life." I said, "You're not violating the law. They can't put you in the penitentiary for sending in another certificate saying you don't think the first one is right. There's no law against that." He said, "There may not be a law against it, but they can still put you in the penitentiary down in this country. All they got to do--you know, they've got the sheriff, they've got the judge, they've got the juries, they've got everybody, and if they don't like you, you go to the pen. I just don't want to risk that."

I didn't believe it, really, at that time. I kept saying, "Aw, they're not going to do anything like that." But we kept on talking to him. I said, "Well, we don't have any more advice for you. You've told us you think you stole two hundred votes. If you don't want to give them back, there's nothing else we can suggest to you. Sorry."

Graham -- I -- 25

By the time the thing was over, he said, "All right, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll--" We had earlier said, "If you want to give them back, come down to the hotel. We'll type up a new certificate, put it back like it was, the returns back like they were sans the two hundred votes." He said, "Let me talk to my wife, because this involves her. It's liable to get me in serious trouble with the powers that be down here and affect my job and future in many ways, and she ought to be in on it."

We tried to keep him from doing that because we assumed that most wives and or women would say, "Don't do it," and he was ready to do it. We couldn't help it, so we said, "Okay." We went by his house. We went in with him, talked to his wife, told her what he was going to do. She objected a little bit but not very strenuously. So we got back in the car, and we went down to the hotel and went to the room. I had a little typewriter, and I sat him down, just waiting for him to sign the certificate that I was typing up. I had a copy of some certificate that had been sent in, the right form and so on, only I was adding to it that he now believes that that certificate that was sent in a week before was in error.

Before I could finish typing it the door--I won't say it was broken in, but it scared me when it was jammed in. I don't know whether it was locked and they knocked the door down or whether they just hit hard and opened it. I don't know whether it was locked or not. But some fellow came in and grabbed him kind of by the scruff of the neck and marched him out of there. I don't know who the man was that did it. I assumed it was one of the deputy sheriffs

Graham -- I -- 26

there. But outside in the hall was Ed Lloyd, the lawyer for the Parr group there. He was out in the hall. I had met him before. I knew who he was, for I'd seen him before. He was out in the hall when this guy came in and just literally lifted Martens out of the room.

G: You said you assumed he was a sheriff or something. Was he uniformed?

CG: No, he wasn't uniformed, but sheriff's deputies aren't uniformed ordinarily, anyway. I don't know whether he was a deputy, but I assumed that. It had to be somebody they figured had the guts to come in there and break in your room, or just barge in your room; whether he broke in or barged in I don't remember for sure. But it wasn't a second that passed. He just grabbed him--Martens--and out he went.

G: This was at your hotel?

CG: Yes.

G: What hotel was it?

CG: There was just one hotel there, I think, of any consequence. I've forgotten the name of it.

G: What did the rest of you do?

CG: There wasn't anything to do. He was gone. In retrospect, we assumed what had happened was his wife called Ed Lloyd and said, "Look, Clarence is fixing to go down there and do this, and you better do something about it." Because, otherwise, they wouldn't have known it. There's no way in the world that they could have known that we were in their typing up that certificate, or that Clarence Martens was in our room, unless his wife told them. So she is bound to have called. We'd just had time to get to the hotel, get out, get up in the room

Graham -- I -- 27

and start typing the certificate, say ten minutes, fifteen minutes at the outside, until they were there picking him up and carrying him out of that room, not literally carrying him but dragging and pushing him, saying, "Come on, come with me." There's another thing that could have turned the course of history. If he'd signed that thing and sent it in taking two hundred votes off of Lyndon's, Coke might have been declared the winner. I don't know. But it was a hectic, nightmarish experience. The whole thing down there was.

G: Any other experiences down there? Did you ever get any threats while you were there?

CG: No, didn't get any threats.

G: Did you see Luis Salas or any of these people?

CG: I saw Luis Salas, I think. Somebody pointed him out and said it was him. But I didn't meet him at that time while we were down in Alice.

G: I guess T. M. Donald was another local official.

CG: Donald was the county chairman, wasn't he? The banker? I couldn't think of the banker's name. I think that was Donald.

G: It's difficult for me to imagine one member of the Parr machine, this Adams, being so ambivalent about it.

CG: Adams?

G: The second county chairman.

CG: Like I said, he wasn't--

G: He must have been elected.

CG: I don't think he was Parr or anti-Parr.

G: Really? But he must have been--

Graham -- I -- 28

CG: It's a very unimportant office. He told me later after we'd fiddled with him, I don't mean months later but a few days later, that he thought he just sort of snuck in. Nobody paid any attention to him getting elected. But he wasn't anti-Parr either. He just ran. Ordinarily they don't even put your name on the ticket. It's a write-in thing in most counties. I don't know whether they had their names on the ticket down there or not. Maybe they did.

Tape 2 of 2

CG: One other incident down there that might be interesting to you: late one evening, after hours, after the courthouse and all had closed, we had a call from a fellow named Holmgreen, who was county clerk. He told us he was friendly to Coke's side of this thing and he'd been reading about it in the papers, and would we come over to the courthouse to his office. We did, walked in the clerk's office. The door was locked. He opened the door, let us in and closed the door. Remember, it's after hours, late in the evening, late in the afternoon, or I don't remember the hour but it was after office hours, around dark. I'm pretty sure it was dark when we got there. He greeted us, exchanged the usual amenities and said, "Say, I forgot something. I've got to meet a fellow downtown. I'll be gone about thirty minutes." He stated a specific time that he'd be gone. "You all wait here."

Well, this was odd. We'd never seen this man before. Why should we wait there? He goes out and locks us into the clerk's

Graham -- I -- 29

office. We were a little nervous about that, you know, "What's up here? Why are we locked in this room?" But as we looked around the place we saw that the vault door was open, the clerk's vault. We went back in there and there is [the] Precinct Thirteen box, Thirteen written on it, Precinct Thirteen, the lock on it but not snapped, not locked. So we got that box out and set it on the table, opened it up and started looking at the ballots in there. There they were--they're numbered, too, you know--obvious change in ink on the signatures of the judge on the back of the ballots, which corresponded to what we had found out from looking at the poll list in the bank office. Or we hadn't looked at it, Adams had looked at it.

There was nothing you could do about it. I mean, there they are. We just knew they were there. That's the only thing we gained by that. We put it back in the vault, and sure enough after a while Mr. Holmgreen comes back. He never mentions that. He had no business to discuss with us. We knew, then, that he had done that so we could go look in that box, had unlocked it and left it open so we could look and verify what we already were pretty sure of anyway. It wasn't really a new disclosure, but we did know then, to our own satisfaction, that somebody had signed their names on the back of two hundred more ballots and stuck them in there to correspond with the names on the poll list. Again, the change of ink and change of handwriting [were evident].

This is where I don't know about Mr. Salas's statement. I just

Graham -- I -- 30

heard him on TV the other day where he said he added the names, that he had put the two hundred votes in there, added them to it or whatever he did. As I recall, and I could be in error about this--it was too long ago to be absolutely certain--but I thought this all the time, that most all the votes--you know there were nearly two thousand votes in that precinct so there were a lot of ballots in there--the signature of Salas, who was election judge, was on all of them. Then the signature on the two hundred later votes was Luis Salas's name, but it wasn't the same handwriting. Now either he didn't sign the first ones, somebody signed them for him, which might have happened, or he didn't sign the last ones, one or the other. Because they were in two different handwritings, an obviously different signature. Yet he says he added them. Something doesn't ring true about that. But it could be. Maybe somebody else signed his name on the eighteen hundred, or whatever there were in there, ahead of time. Some clerk might have done it, I don't know.

That's about the evidence we had. We had the testimony of eleven people, or the ten people who had not voted and the man who had voted last at seven o'clock. Their names had been added, and they were picked at random through the two hundred. We found the ballots in the box at Holmgreen's, by him inviting us over, in effect, to let us look at them. So we knew whereof we spoke by this time.

G: There was some speculation that one of those two hundred and two was deceased.

Graham -- I -- 31

CG: I don't remember that. I've heard that, or maybe I read it in the paper. It could be. But see, I didn't work on all of them. We split up to get those people in a hurry, and I didn't talk to all of them. Of course, we wouldn't talk to the dead one anyway. But my names that I had to check, all of them were living people. Now whether Kellis or Jim had some names that turned out to be dead people, I don't know.

G: You talked to three or four, and the others [did the same]?

CG: Yes, they did the same. Yes.

G: One of yours was a student, is that right?

CG: One of them was a student at Kingsville. What is that the name of that college? It was a junior college then. Kingsville, it's a big college now. Pan American? No, Pan American is in the Valley. Anyway, he was away at college during the summer term, hadn't been in town. None of them had voted, we're satisfied about that.

You've got to remember, too, that in the hearings we had, both before the executive committee of the Democratic Party and in federal court, Johnson's lawyers never denied these facts that I'm talking about. They're uncontroverted, as far as I know, by anybody. Now Salas comes along and says, "Yes, I did it," which is nothing new to us. We knew he'd done it anyway. He didn't have to tell us. Nobody has ever denied that. Lyndon Johnson didn't deny it. His lawyers--I can't think of his name now, Looney?

G: Everett Looney.

CG: Yes, in court they didn't deny this. They simply said it didn't make any difference legally.

Graham -- I -- 32

G: Do you recall any of the other people that you talked to on that list.

CG: No. Too long ago to remember. Most of them were Mexican people. We took some of them to Fort Worth. I had the job of taking them to Fort Worth on the train.

G: The people?

CG: Yes, to testify. Oh yes, we had them there in person. It was a hilarious trip. Most of those women that I remember hadn't been on a train before. I brought them to San Antonio, put them on a train there and went to Fort Worth, took them to the Blackstone Hotel. They'd never been on an elevator before. We got rooms for them, and going up in the elevator they started screaming. It was a sight, bringing those old gals up there.

G: They weren't intimidated by--?

CG: We were charged with having intimidated them. Ed Lloyd, the guy that intimidated me when he had that fellow break in our hotel room, during the executive committee hearing pointed to Dibrell and I and said, "There's the goon squad. Those two members of the goon squad went down there and threatened those poor Mexican people and intimidated them at the point of a gun. That's how they got these affidavits and all this testimony." That's always been a big joke between Kellis and Jim Gardner and I. We were scared to death down there in Alice. We were the ones who were intimidated.

G: Was Frank Hamer down there?

CG: That was later, yes. They tried to call, and did call, another

Graham -- I -- 33

meeting of the whole county executive committee to recanvass these returns. That's when we got afraid, really afraid. We thought we'd maybe have a majority on that committee that would vote to take those two hundred votes away from Lyndon. It turned out we didn't have a majority there, but we were afraid that if we did, that in any event somebody might try to break up the meeting. We had already had the experience of people breaking into our room; that much had frightened us some. But if we happened to have this meeting, there's no telling what they're liable to do, because it'll make all the difference. That's when we asked Frank Hamer to come down.

G: Who talked to him, do you remember?

CG: I don't know who called him, but we called from down there saying, "We need somebody."

G: Oh, you were still there?

CG: We were still down there. "We need somebody here if they're going to have this meeting." We got this advice from the local people that were on our side: "You better anticipate trouble if you try to get that committee together." So we called up to Austin. We were in contact up here all the time, with Austin. That's when they got him. We didn't get him, but they sent Frank Hamer down there. I talked to him a lot. He stayed in our hotel room. I visited with him a lot. All we wanted him to do was to be there in case any rough stuff started. He had a reputation for being a tough guy that killed Bonnie and Clyde, et cetera. Probably people were afraid of him. He didn't do anything except sit there on the front porch of this

Graham -- I -- 34

house, the residence where they were going to have the executive committee meeting, and nothing happened.

G: I thought he forced his way into the building where the poll list was being kept or something.

CG: The poll list was in the bank vault. Frank Hamer didn't do anything except sit there. His presence was all we wanted. He sat there to insure that there wouldn't be any problem.

G: How long did he stay?

CG: As I recall it was just one day and night. He spent the night. I remember talking to him in our hotel room, listening to him tell about Bonnie and Clyde. He was just a great old character.

G: Did you get the impression that he was for Stevenson?

CG: Yes. They'd been friends a long time. He wasn't involved in the campaign or anything of that sort. He was a retired old man, really, at that time. I just gathered that he and Coke had been friends way back, you know, years before. He was somebody he felt he could call on to go down there at our request. We requested it, Coke didn't.

G: Did you get to Fort Worth when they were having the [committee meeting]?

CG: Oh, yes.

G: Can you talk about the scene there?

CG: I can talk about the scene at that executive committee meeting. This whole thing, as I've tried to tell you before, was kind of a nightmarish thing. Everything was so close in time. Time was of the essence. We had to move in a hurry. We got to Fort Worth, [and] we put on our testimony

Graham -- I -- 35

that we had that I've just related to you--and that's it, there's not any more, there's not any less than that--before the executive committee. That's when Ed Lloyd accused me and Kellis Dibrell and Jim Gardner of being the goon squad that intimidated these poor people. That was the only thing he could say. Ed Lloyd was the lawyer for the Parr people in Alice. He had a law firm there, a big law firm, too. That's the only thing they could say about us. That's the only way. Remember, Lyndon didn't say this. His attorneys didn't say this. Ed Lloyd said it. It's about all he could say: "You got those"--see, we had them sign affidavits plus the ones we had there in person to testify--"affidavits and this testimony by intimidation." There was no other answer, because we had the facts.

Anyway, after the thing was argued, presented to the executive committee, a vote was taken. We knew it was going to be close because everybody, both sides, had been polling the executive committee to see how they stood. It turned out tied. This is typical of that whole experience, a tie vote in the executive committee. One guy wasn't there. They were just about to declare it tied, which would have meant that Lyndon would have lost because it was his motion. You know, a motion fails if there's a tie vote. His side had moved that he be certified as the candidate. The vote was taken, and it was tied. Just before they dropped the gavel and announced the vote, one of Lyndon's men came in. It was thirty-one to thirty-two, as I recall, the final vote in executive committee. Again, there was a vote that changed the course of history. If it had gone the other way

Graham -- I -- 36

Coke's name would have been on the ballot, because there was the authority that decides the split vote. We lost there by one vote. Our only recourse then was to go to court, try to resort to the courts.

G: Before we leave the executive committee, did you lose any votes that you thought you had in that count, or was there any trading that you knew of?

CG: No, not that I know anything about.

G: You did a nose-count?

CG: Of the executive committee? I didn't personally.

G: Your people did.

CG: Our people did.

G: You thought you had enough votes, didn't you?

CG: Well, we knew it was close. We knew it was close. I've forgotten. I wasn't that close to the final judgment of whether we had them or not. We knew it was close, I remember that.

G: You don't remember anyone switching sides, though, at the last moment?

CG: No. I don't remember it. That doesn't mean somebody didn't.

G: So you lost on this front by one vote.

CG: By one vote, yes, and then we went to the court. You see, it was useless to file a suit of any kind in Jim Wells County. Everybody's against you there. It would be a farce to do that. We didn't have much option but to go into federal court, and so the suit was filed in Judge Whitfield Davidson's court in Fort Worth. There we produced the same testimony we produced before the executive committee, proof.

Graham -- I -- 37

As I say, during neither of these proceedings, neither at the executive committee nor in the court, did Lyndon Johnson or his lawyers deny what we were saying. Their argument in both cases was that it didn't make any difference legally. So we presented the evidence in federal court. It was substantially the same evidence, exactly the same, I suppose.

G: Were you there?

CG: Yes, I was sitting in the courtroom. One of the first times I ever remembered seeing Lyndon was sitting in the courtroom in Fort Worth. Then the arguments were: we were saying there ought to be an injunction against Lyndon Johnson's name being certified as a candidate because of these facts, the two hundred votes, and they were saying his name ought to be certified in any event. They said the executive committee of the party has no right to do anything other than look at the returns as submitted by the various county executive committees and add them up and see who's elected; they're not a court, they've got no right to go into determining which votes were legal and which were not legal. That was where they got the one vote margin, on that point, I believe.

When we got into federal court Johnson's arguments as I recall-- and I don't remember them all or in any great detail--were that, number one, the federal court didn't have any jurisdiction. It was a party primary, not a general election, strictly a party affair, and the federal courts had no jurisdiction over it. Again, I think they advanced the same arguments they did before the executive committee,

Graham -- I -- 38

that this court can't make a judgment. We can't validate or invalidate all the votes in Texas. We can't act on the basis of one precinct where two hundred votes were added and none other. In a way, Judge Davidson said, "Well, we've got time yet." This was, I guess, late September, and the general election not until November. "We've got time."

I remember him making the statement that got quoted in the papers: "Let's open the windows and let the sun shine in. Let's go down there and look into this thing." And he appointed masters in chancery, which federal courts can do, to go down there. One went to Duval County and one went to Jim Wells, to Alice. They're little judges, in effect. "You go down there and hold a hearing. You've got the powers of the court to subpoena, to bring people in. Let's see what's going on down there." So they did. That was the next phase, then. We went back to Alice again.

G: Did you yourself go back?

CG: Oh, yes. This was when we next saw Clarence Martens that I was telling you about a minute ago. The Master in Chancery, I think his name was Smith, a big man, presided. Again we presented our evidence. All the lawyers were there. It was more lawyers, I believe, than had ever been in that little courtroom. It was a little bitty courtroom, as I recall. Men like Dan Moody and Everett Looney and I don't know who all were brought in there. The same evidence was presented. Then we moved that we look in the Precinct Thirteen ballot box, and they brought the ballot box in. Now you remember, I had seen in that ballot

Graham -- I -- 39

box. I knew what was in there. They bring it in, and it's locked now. It had not been locked when we saw it a week or two or three weeks before that. But it's now securely locked, and nobody had a key. So the Master in Chancery ordered somebody to go get a locksmith and bring him up there to cut the lock off. They did, cut it open, opened the box, and it's absolutely empty, nothing at all in that box. Again, to us they said that Lyndon Johnson got so many votes here. Where are they? They're not in the box.

Almost at this moment Justice Black stopped the proceeding. We received a telegram, or the Master in Chancery did, to cease proceedings, that the federal courts had no jurisdiction. He--Black--was so holding. When the Supreme Court's not in session, which they never are in August, one judge can act for the court, and Justice Black ordered the whole thing stopped. A very dramatic moment--we opened the ballot box, and there's nothing there. That's where it ended.

But getting back to Clarence Martens, they put him on the stand, trying to prove that we had tried to intimidate him. You see, he had almost signed that certificate in my room that night. Clarence, as I told you a while ago, seemed just a nice little fellow. He might have been on the timid side, reserved side, but I thought he had a good lot of courage ultimately to offer to go ahead and do what he offered to do in the face of the circumstances. But anyway, they put him on the stand, and the questions were, "Is it not a fact that Callan Graham and Kellis Dibrell, Jim Gardner, one or both or all three of them, threatened you with all kinds of dire consequences if you didn't

Graham -- I -- 40

do something, didn't sign this certificate?" We knew they were going to ask him that because they had been using this tactic all along. This was Ed Lloyd's line, that we were a "goon squad."

I remember pulling my chair up in the courtroom and sitting right in front of Clarence, just as close as I could without being too obvious, and looking him right in the eye when he answered those questions, and he never would verify what they said. He twisted and he squirmed. I really felt sorry for the guy. Of he was under tremendous pressure. It would have been a lot easier for him to say, "Yes, they used a pistol on me, they threatened to kill me," and all this kind of stuff. He never would say it. He'd duck and dodge and twist and squirm, and finally they just gave up and didn't pursue that line of questioning anymore. Anyway, that ended the hearing by the Master in Chancery in Alice.

G: Couldn't Coke Stevenson have asked for a recount of all the votes in the state?

CG: That's what you should do, but you remember the elections now are back in May. They called that the Lyndon Johnson bill when we moved the elections back. I was for doing that a long time before that after this experience in 1948, because there's no time between an August 28 primary remember, that's almost the first of September when you're having your run-off election, and the Democratic Executive Committee and convention meets in mid-September. You've got two weeks or maybe three, or along in there, something of the sort, I've forgotten the exact dates, to get a certification. You can't possibly have a recount in that period of time. Now you've got it back so the primaries are

Graham -- I -- 41

in May, sixty days earlier. Now you would have time. You'd have about ninety days to conduct a complete check of all the votes.

Of course, even then you're not getting into matters of fraud. You could go double-check and count the ballots in Kimble County and say, "Yes, there's so many here for Coke and so many here for Lyndon." That doesn't get into the question of whether they were stuffed, whether they were valid, whether they were living people. It doesn't get to that. It's a recount of the count that they've already sent in unless you can prove that there were some illegally added, which we had done in Precinct Thirteen.

G: The Johnson people at that time were, I think, arguing that if you looked into one box that you ought to look into all of them.

CG: That's their argument, that's true.

G: Was this alternative ever really considered?

CG: Not too much, because of time. You couldn't do it. It was really a sad situation when you had a run-off primary that is tantamount to election, or was then, and you've only got two or three weeks between then and the time that the party's nominees are certified to go on the general election ballot. That's how fast it was. You can't do it. So we zeroed in, we proved this: that Lyndon Johnson did not receive a majority of the votes as reported. His arguments [were] two: the federal courts have no jurisdiction of this question, and, second, it doesn't make any difference, for the executive committee can only do a clerical job. They can look at the returns as submitted and add them up and declare a winner. They cannot be a court and go in

Graham -- I -- 42

and determine validity of votes. There may be illegal votes all over the place on both sides. It wouldn't be fair, really.

This is where I have a certain sympathy for Lyndon's position and his lawyers', especially his lawyers' position, faced with what they were at that moment. Because they had an option of taking the course they did take, which was that the state executive committee is not a court, it has no right to go in and make judgments, especially in one precinct, unless it's going to judge them all and there's not time for that, that's impossible. They had the option to say, "We're going to insist on the returns as reported." That's one option. The other option would be to concede that two hundred votes were illegally cast, which they, I'm sure, knew at that time. I won't say they knew it at the time it was done. They knew it after we proved it because it was obvious, and they never denied it. The second option would have been to concede the election to Coke on the basis of those two hundred votes. They had no other way to go.

At that time, in the heat of the battle, it was easy to say that's what Lyndon ought to have done, conceded. We presented cold, hard proof that he got two hundred votes illegally added a week after the election, by fraud and so on, which Luis Salas now says is true. Like I say, it never was denied. It was easy for us to say then, in the heat of battle, in the heat of the campaign and so on, that, well, he should

Graham -- I -- 43

have done it. But I'm older now and a little more mature, I've been down the road a ways. I don't think I would have if I'd been Lyndon. Because look what he'd be doing, he'd be saying, "Yes, you guys have proved that two hundred votes of mine are illegal. That does not establish that all of your votes are legal; but, I'm not going to accept the nomination." I can't blame him now. I might have said then, as a campaigner in the heat of the battle, that that's what he ought to do. I don't know whether I said it publicly or not, but but I'm sure I thought it. But I don't think it now.

G: I know that the Johnson people felt that there had been some irregularities in some of the East Texas counties.

CG: That was quoted in the papers at the time, that they thought there was some. Of course, our answer to that was, "Go prove it. We've proved ours. You go prove yours and bring it on up here." They said they haven't got time. Nobody had time.

G: That's always the burden for the loser.

CG: Oh yes, that's right.

G: That's not for the winner to do. But you don't think that the possibility that irregularities would have been discovered in other counties contributed to Stevenson's decision not to ask for a recount.

CG: No, I don't think so. I think time was the big thing. You can't do it. We suspected that votes were done this way in Duval, in Laredo, in Rio Grande City and all over the machine country. Remember, we only dug into one littel precinct and found two hundred. No, I think a recount -- a check of validity, going in and doing the type of

Graham -- I -- 44

investigation we did, is too long winded if you're going to do it all over the state in two thousand precincts. You just can't get around to it. To do that, I think Coke would have said yes to that kind of a recount, but not just a recount of the certificates that come in because it doesn't tell you anything. Besides, you don't have time to make that kind of an investigation. Lyndon said he thought there were irregularities in Tyler or somewhere in East Texas.

G: In Gregg County.

CG: Gregg County, wherever. Our answer then was, "Go prove it." Maybe so. I don't know that there was or wasn't.

G: I was going to ask you, did you have any knowledge at all of irregularities on the other side?

CG: None whatever. But, look, I don't think the candidates in those kind of situations necessarily have any knowledge of it. Nobody needed to have any knowledge of what the Parr machine was going to do at the time it was being done. They had made up their minds a year before that they were going to pull all the stops against Coke.

G: We were talking while the tape was off about the recent statement by Luis Salas that Johnson was down there in Alice. Can you give me your knowledge here on this?

CG: We would have liked to have proved that he was there during this fight. We could never come up with any evidence. We tried. We asked, we inquired. We could never find any evidence at all. We even tried to check up and see if he'd phoned down there.

G: Really?

Graham -- I -- 45

CG: Yes. And we couldn't find out.

G: How did you do that?

CG: There was a telephone operator in San Marcos that had told somebody that told us--it came to us about fourth or fifth hand--that Lyndon had called down there from San Marcos or through the San Marcos exchange. We lit on that like a hawk on a june bug to see if that was true. It was not. We couldn't establish it. We would have liked to have proved it, because we think it would have done some good then in the fight. It may not have. It might not have been material.

G: Did you have any evidence that he sent subordinates down there, that Connally was there?

CG: No, I didn't. I didn't have any and never heard of any. I don't think he needed to. In retrospect, he didn't need to go down there. He didn't need to phone down there. He might have phoned down there, I wouldn't blame him if he had, but he didn't need to. Now, Salas says that he was there and told George Parr, I believe, and I'm just quoting from the newspapers now or TV accounts, that Lyndon said, "I sure could use two hundred more votes." Is that in substance what he said? Okay. If Salas is telling the truth, and I don't know that he is or that he's not, that would have been a tie to Lyndon going down there and saying something like that. Yet I can also see that if he was there, assuming he was, and said, "I sure could use two hundred more votes," as not being necessarily an implication. It could be or couldn't be. I don't think it proves anything. Coke could have probably said the same thing in any position he was in,

Graham -- I -- 46

in any locale, "I could sure use two hundred more votes." I don't know about the details of the Salas story. Did he say then that George Parr told him in Spanish?

G: As I recall.

CG: Somebody told me that. I didn't hear.

G: Let me ask you some more about the possible recourses at the time, before Black's ruling. I understand that Stevenson considered seeking help from Beauford Jester, who was then governor at the time, but Jester was in Washington, was out of the state.

CG: Jester was at the Democratic convention in Fort Worth. I don't know at what point he was in Washington or whether he was in Washington, but I saw him in Fort Worth.

G: Did you?

CG: Yes. But you see, there is a lot of time between the election and the Democratic convention. He could have been in Washington between that or after that, but he was at the convention in Fort Worth. That's called the "governor's convention"; you know he would be there.

G: Johnson proposed having the FBI investigate the questionable counties, and this was something that the Stevenson lawyers evidently rejected because they felt that Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover had a close relationship, being neighbors as they were in Washington. Do you remember any of this?

CG: I don't remember anything about that. Because I think at this point I can't see Coke rejecting any kind of investigation by anybody. He stood to win, certainly not to lose. He was already a loser. I can't

Graham -- I -- 47

imagine him rejecting any kind of investigation into that thing. You see, we asked the Senate to investigate. I mailed the transcripts to the, whoever it was, the head of the committee in the Senate that does those things. I mailed them from Junction, the transcripts of the testimony before the executive committee and the federal court and whatever other documentation we had. We urged an investigation upon the Senate. So we wanted an investigation. I can't go along with the idea that we declined or that Coke declined any kind of investigation.

G: Johnson theoretically would oppose this because Stevenson would have more support in the Senate than he would. I think it was a matter of fighting--

CG: This is the United States Senate.

G: Oh, in the U.S. Senate.

CG: Yes, the United States Senate.

G: I thought it was in the state senate.

CG: The last round in this battle was a challenge to seating Lyndon Johnson as senator. Was it Jenner? The Jenner committee? The Senate investigating committee, or something, I've forgotten what the official name of it was. But Senator Jenner, I think, was the chairman. They went into it. They sent investigators down here at our request to look into this thing.

G: There was also a suggestion, I think, that both names be placed on the November ballot.

CG: Yes. Somebody made that suggestion. I don't remember.

Graham -- I -- 48

G: I think maybe it was Davidson.

CG: Judge Davidson? I am not sure. I remember it was made. Of course, we'd do that. We were for that.

G: Sure. Is there anything else here that we have left out?

CG: No, I can't think of anything. I'm sure there is. There is a lot of stuff there jammed into a short period of time. I have added nothing in my interview here that you didn't know or that hasn't been in the papers or a matter of record. But I think in the context of the history of the thing, a dispassionate look at it, I would have to say that Lyndon should have taken that nomination. He would have had to have been a martyr of the first class to say, "Yes, two hundred votes have been stolen. I know it, it's been proved, it's certain. Take the nomination. Take the Senate seat." I wouldn't have done that. I think it is important. I don't believe he had a moral duty to do that at that time, to decline the nomination because we had proved that two hundred votes of his were illegal without having proved that all of ours were legal.

I think this is the crux of the question. We couldn't discharge that much work. We assumed that all of ours were legal that had been counted. We were challenging two hundred of his with no opportunity for him really, effectively, to challenge any of ours because there is not enough time. That's a real dilemma for a man to be in. I don't know that it appeared to him as a dilemma at the time. In retrospect, in looking at it from any moral perspective, to say that he should have declined it on that basis I think is wrong. I think he

Graham -- I -- 49

should have taken it. I think I would have accepted it. We have to remember, too, that he was elected in November by better than two to one as I recall, when the facts were fresh on the minds of people. In just a very few weeks, in fact, the papers were continually full of this stuff right on up until the November general election. As I recall he won by a margin of something like two to one, which was the real election. So the people of Texas still supported him two to one in spite of all this. I think their judgment is about like mine.

Now from Coke's standpoint, though, this embittered Coke very much because he felt like, and I can see why he felt like, the election was stolen. I thought it was stolen--not by Lyndon, not by anybody except the people down there that told him--Coke--a year ahead of time they were going to do everything they could against him.

I think it's tragic that then, or now, that sort of thing can exist in a civilized country. I think that is the tragedy. Not that Lyndon won or that Coke lost, but that in this country of ours you can see the things I saw down there, things that can happen, that Luis Salas now says he did and that we knew he did nearly thirty years ago.

Admit it--it can be done. It can be done today. It can be done right now, down there, or anywhere, by people who are so inclined.

G: Did Stevenson and Johnson have any other contact that you are aware of?

CG: Not that I know of, no.

G: I doubt if he [Stevenson] had much contact with George Parr after that either.

Graham -- I -- 50

CG: No. Stevenson retired back to the ranch, where he liked it anyway. He just stayed there. He never emerged much in public view, any kind of public occasion, hardly at all. As I say, he was a bitter man. He was my friend and my benefactor, and I felt sorry for him.

G: That was really his first defeat in politics wasn't it?

CG: Yes. That's right. See, he was about sixty at that time. Lyndon was in his forties, I believe.

G: I guess Stevenson was fifty-five when that happened.

CG: I thought he was older than that. I thought he was around sixty. I could be wrong on that. I haven't done any research to look things up at all.

G: I certainly do appreciate your time.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 of Interview I]

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